

THE
P O O R E
Doubting
CHRISTIAN
Drawne to
CHRIST.



Wherein the main letts and hindrances which
keepe men from comming to Christ are dis-
covered.

With speciall helps to recover
Gods favour.

Mar.
397.

*Ho, every one that thirsteth, drinke of the wa-
ters of life, and he that hath no money, come buy
and eate freely.*

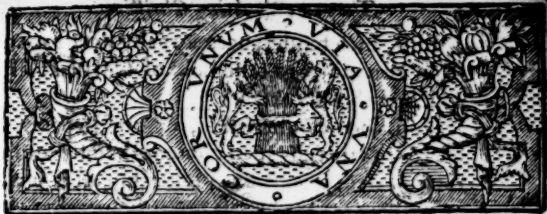
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THE
POORE DOUBTING
CHRISTIAN
drawne unto
Christ.

IOHN 6. 45.

*Every man therefore that hath heard and hath
learned of the Father, cometh unto mee.*

Divers Lets and impediments
there are which hinder poore
Christians from coming
unto Christ, all which I de-
fire to reduce to these follow-
ing heads.

A 2

First

First, such hinderances as really keepe men from comming to take hold of Christ at all, which are briefly these.

*Lets
which
hinder
men
from
com-
ming to
Christ.*

1. Blinde carelesnesse, or presumptuous security, whereby men content themselves in their present condition, presuming all is well with them, when there is no such matter.

2. Being convinced of this, they bethinke how to save themselves by their owne strength, and thereupon set upon a reformation of life, thinking to make God amends by reforming some sinnes which they heare themselves re- proved of by the Ministers.

3. The sinner being convinced of his utter inability to please God in himselfe, at length gets up a stayre higher, and sees all his performances, and prayers, and duties to be of no power in themselves, but that he must leave all, and cleave onely unto Christ by faith; and this he thinks hee can doe well enought, and so thrusts himselfe upon Christ, thinking all the worke is then done, and no more to bee looked after.

4. If hee sees this failes him too, then he goes yet further, and confesseth he cannot come to Christ except Christ give him his hand, and helpe him up: therefore now hee will attend upon the ordinances, and labour
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and bestirre himself hard in the use of all good meanes, conceiving thereby to hammer out at last, a *faith* of his owne to make him happie. And here he rests, hanging as it were upon the outside of the Arke, so long till at last the waves and windes growing fierce and violent, hee is beaten off from his hold, and so sinks for ever.

Besides these, there are other kinds of hinderances, which doe not indeed deprive a man of title and interest to eternall happinesse, but make the way tedious and uncomfortable, so that he cannot come to Christ so readily, as he desires and longs to doe; the ground whereof is this, when men out of carnall reason contrive another way to come unto Christ, then ever hee ordained or revealed, when we set up a standard by Gods Standard, and out of our owne imagination make another condition of beleeving then ever Christ required or ordained. Thus we make barres in the way, and manacle our hands, and fetter our feet, and then we complaine we cannot goe: thus it is with you poore Christians, and the fault is your owne. Now amongst many there be three hinderances which are chiefly to be observed, by which many gracious hearts are marvellously hindered from coming

Three
main
hinderances
which
keep
men
from
Christ.

ming to, & from receiving that comfort from Christ, which they might, and hee is willing to bestow.

1. First, the distressed soule being happily truly humbled, takes notice of the beauty of holinesse, and the Image of God stamp't upon the hearts of his children, and of all those precious promises which God hath made to all that are his, now the soule seeing these, begins thus to reason with himselfe, and saith, Surely if I were so holy and so gracious; then I might have hope to receive the pardon of my sinnes; for were my heart so enlarged to duties, and could my heart bee so carried with power against my corruptions to master them, then there were some hope; but when I have no power against sin, nor any heart to seeke so importunately for a Christ, how dare I thinke that any mercy belongs to me, having so many wants? Thus they dare not come to the promise, and they will not venture upon it, because they have not that enlargement to duties, and that power against corruption which sometimes the Saints of God have.

But wee must know this doth not hinder, we make it a hinderance, when in truth it is none; for observe it, we must not thinke to bring enlargement and hope to the promise, but

but wee must goe to the promise for them; hope must be stirred, and desire quickned, and love and joy kindled by the promise; who made this a condition of the *covenant*, that a man must have so much enlargement before he come to the promise? Our *Saviour* requires no portion, but meere poverty and emptinesse: If thou hast nothing, he will have thee, provided that thou wilt have him; *The rich he sends empty away*, but the poore is satisfied, and the thirsty refreshed: there is nothing required on our side, but onely to receive him as a husband: *Buy without money*, saith the text; you must not thinke to come and buy a husband; the Lord looks for no power or sufficiency of our selves, no power against corruption, nor enlargement to duties; if you will be content that Christ shall take all from you, and dispose of you, then, take a Saviour and have him.

Luk: 14: 33.

Esay. 55. 1.

But the poore soule saith, If I goe thus huddled, how shall I know that I doe not presume, and how shall I know that I have a true title to the promise.

Quest.

J answer, there is no better argument in the world that thou hast an interest in Christ, then this, thy taking of the Lord Christ as a Saviour wholly, and as a husband. *John 1. 12.*

Ans.

As many as receiued him, to them he gave power to be the sonnes of God, even to them that beleeve on his name. He doth not say, to as many as had such enlargement in duties, and such power against corruptions; but if thou wilt take Christ upon those termes which hee offers himselfe, there is no better argument under heaven; that thou hast a title to the promise. There is a desperate despaire that often seizeth upon the hearts of distressed sinners.

2. Therefore in the second place, as the sinner lookes upon the excellency of Christ, and grace, and his owne insufficiency, and so will not venture upon the promise, so he lookes upon his owne sinfulness and worthlessness, and therefore dares not venture upon mercy; he viewes the number of his sinnes so many and vile, and the continuance of them so long, and he seeth the floods of abominations coming in amaine upon his soule, and Satan helpshim forwards hereto; for this is the policie of the Devill, that, if he can, he will make a man that hee shall never see his sinne, but say, there is mercie enough in a Saviour, and therefore I may live as I list: But when the sinner will needes see his sin, then hee will let him see nothing but sinne; the one that he may presume, and the other that he may despaire.

Now

Now the poore sinner stayes here; tell him of the mercy of God, and of the plenteous redemption in Christ, and of the riches of the freeness of Gods grace. What, saith he, should I thinke that there is any mercy for mee, and that I have any interest in Christ; that were strange? And thus the soule is here poring, and fastned, and serled upon his corruption, and is ever stirring the wound, and never goes to the Physitian: For a man is as well kept from looking to Christ by despaire, as by presumption; before he sees his sin, he thinkes his condition is good, and he hath a sufficiency of his owne, and needs not goe to Christ; and when he sees his sinne, then he beholds so much vilenesse in himselfe, that he dares not goe to Christ, lest when he goes before him, hee send him downe to the pit. Herein the devill is very subtile; but this doth not hinder our title to Christ, neither ought it to discourage our hearts from laying hold on salvation.

For first, (observe it) for whom did Christ come into the world, and for whom did he die when he was come? It was not for the righteous, that needed him not, but for the poor sinner that condemnes himselfe, & knowes he cannot save himselfe. Paul saith, *Christ Iesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chiefe;*

1 Tim.
1. 15.

And *Zach. 13, 1.* *There is a fountaine opened for sinne, and for uncleannesse,* that is, for all sorts of sinnes, and for all kind of sinners: be their iniquities never so great, and never so vile, there is a fountaine let open, come who will; there was never any saved but a Rebelle, and never any man received to mercy, but he that opposed the mercy of God, and his grace in Christ. The fiery Serpents did sting the people in the wilderness, but there was a brazen Serpent to heale them.

Observe the folly of this plea: What Scripture ever said, that the greatnesse of mans sinne could hinder the greatnesse of Gods mercy? No Scripture reveales this, we see
Psa: 25, 11. *David prayeth the contrary, Have mercy upon me O Lord, and pardon my sinnes, for they are great:* Nay, God himselfe doth the quite contrary, *Isa. 43. 24. 25.* *Thou hast made me serve with thy sinnes, and wearied mee with thine iniquities, yet I am hee that blotteth out thy transgressions for my names sake.* When the Iewes did tire GOD with their distempers, and burthened him with their sinfull courses, then the Lord for his owne names sake would not so much as remember their iniquities against them.

Againe observe, that sinnes though they be
 never

never so haynous of themselves, yet if the soule can see them, & the heart be burthened with them, they are so farre from hindering the worke of faith, and from making thee incapable of mercy, that they fit thee to goe to Christ: The truth is, (which I pray you take notice of) it is not properly our unworthinesse, but our pride and haughtinesse that hinders us from comming to Christ; for wee would have something in our selves, and not have all from Christ. Take the distressed soule that sees the vilenesse of his sinnes: suppose thy sinnes were fewer, neverthelesse even then thou goest not to Christ, because thou art perswaded of the freenesse of his grace, but because thou hast a worthinesse in thy selfe, and wouldst bring something to Christ, and not receive all from him. Therefore it is thy pride, and thy selfe conceitednesse that hinders thee, thou must have thus much grace and holinesse, and Christ must not justifie the ungodly, but the godly man; I tell thee, then he will never justifie a man while the world stands,

But the soule replies againe, My sinnes are *Object.* worse, not onely because they are many, but because of the mercy and salvation that I have rejected, which hath beene offered mee from

from day to day.

Ans.

This hinders not, provided that thou canst see those evils of thine: though thou hast cast away the kindnesse of the Lord, yet the Lord will not cast away thee, if thou wilt come and

Esa. 57. seeke him earnestly againe: *For the iniquity of*

17. 18. *his covetousnesse I was wroth (saith God) and I smote him, I hid my selfe, and he went on frowardly in the way of his owne heart.* If this could have

hindred, *Judah* should never have received mercy, but the text saith, I have seen his wayes,

Ier. 3. 1.

and will heale him; *Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet turne againe to me, saith the Lord.* There is no time past if a man have

but a heart to returne; there is no limitation of the riches of Gods free grace, except the sin against the holy Ghost, *Rev. 3. 20.* *I stand at the doore and knock*; though he cry till he be hoarse, and stand till he be weary, yet he stands still: if any adulterous or deceitfull wretch will open, the Lord will come in, and bring comfort, and sup with him.

Object.

Oh, that is true, saith the poore soule, had I but a heart to mourne for my basenesse; see my sinnes I doe, but this is my misery, I cannot bee burthened with them, I have a heart that cannot breake and mourne for dishonouring of God.

This

This hinders not neither, provided that thy *Answ.*
 heart is weary of itselfe, that it cannot be
 weary of sinne: *The Lord shewes mercy, because Mich.*
he will shew mercy, it is not because thou canst *7.18.*
 please him, but because mercy pleaseth him.
 When did the Lord shew mercy to *Paul*, even
 then when *Paul* did expresse most malice a-
 gainst him; *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou mee?*
 he persecutes Christ, and yet Christ pities him,
 and shewes him mercy; and so the churlish
Jaylor, when he was most opposite against the *ABs.*
 meanes of grace, the Lord shewed then most
 compassion upon him; He that before resisted
 the meanes of grace, was now brought home
 by those meanes.

But woe, saith the poore soule, you are now *Object.*
 come to the quicke; this very word is like a
 Millstone about my neck, to sinke my soule
 for ever; for this is the depth of that basenesse
 that lies on me, that all the meanes doe not
 better me. Why, though *Paul* and the *Jaylor*
 were bad enough, yet they were made better
 by the meanes; but this is my hopelesse cor-
 dition, that the meanes of grace prevaile not
 on mee. Is there such a heart in hell as I; how
 ill must I needs be, when all the meanes in the
 world will doe mee no good? but, me thinkes,
 I feele my heart more hard & stubborne under
 all

all Gods Ordinances . my condition is certainly hopelesse, when the meanes that should soften me, doe but harden me, and make me worse.

Answ. This is the last plea whereby the devill holds down the heart of a poore sinner; but let me answer thee, this hinders not neither but that at least thou maist have of mercy, therefore observe three passages by way of answer.

- I First, the Word and meanes of grace doe work good, if it make thee more sensible of thy hardnesse and deadnesse, though happily it worke not that good, and after the same manner that thou desirest, yet if it make thee see thy balenes & hardnesse of heart, & dulnes in regard of that body of death which hangs upon thee; then the word workes in the best manner, because it is after Gods manner, howsoever not after thine: That Physick workes most kindly, that makes the party sick before it works; so it is with the VVord; thou hast a proud heart, and liftest up thy seife in thine owne abilities, and trustest in thine owne strength, and thinkest that thy care and improvement of the meanes would work wonders; but now the Word works sweetly, when it makes thee apprehensive, that

that a wounded soule is the gift of God, not of man, nor of the meanes; and therefore the VVord makes thee looke to God for it, and to prize it when thou hast it; and the VVord makes thee looke to God to continue it; to feele deadnesse is life, and to feele hardnesse is softnesse; onely remember this one Caution, except there bee some lustor distemper *Caution.* that thy heart hankers after, for then the VVord will harden thee, because thou hardenest thy selfe.

Secondly, (marke this I beseech you) thou art the cause why thy heart is not softned, & why the VVord works not upon thy soule; the distemper of thy owne heart hinders the working of the VVord, and dispensation of Gods providence, and the tenour of the Covenant of Grace; thou must not thinke to limit the Holy One of Israel, for it is a Covenant of Grace; the Lord will not stand bent to thy bow, and give thee grace when thou wilt; it is not for us to know the times & seasons *Waite* VVhat if the Lord will not give thee *for* grace this yeare nor the next, nor all thy life, *mercy.* if at the last gaspe hee will drop in a little favor, it is more then he owes thee, therefore heare to day, and waite to morrow, and continue so doing, because thou knowest not when

when God may blesse his owne Ordinances; & complaine not of delayes, but waite, for God hath waited for you long, and therefore if he make you waite for peace of conscience, & assurance of his love, the Lord deales equally with you, and as shall bee best for you; God gives what, and when, and how he will, therefore waite for it,

3 *Rest not upon duties.* Thirdly, know and consider, that thou hast rested upon thine owne duties and endeavours, and thou doest not goe to God, that blesseth the meanes and endeavours; the fault is thine owne, (I say) because thou retest in thine owne performances, and in the power of the means that thou apprehendest, and doest not goe to God, that would have wrought more then all these: for did a man depend upon Gods power and mercy in his Ordinances, hee should alwayes finde some proportionable succour, as well when he findes no successe as when he findes any; for God sometimes gives, and sometimes delayes, but Gods love is as constant when he gives not, as when he gives. Therefore labour to get out from all carnall confidence in holy duties, and rest not in thy performances, but loock beyond all duties to God, and desire him to give thee successe above them:

Many

Many a man makes his services, his *Saviours*. Hee makes them the bottome to beare up his conscience, the ground whereof is this: Happily he findes and fees by woful experience, what the fruits of sinne are. Hee sees the venome of his corruptions, and the lamentable effects of all his sinful practises. Hee thought it before a fine thing to sweare, & lye, and drink, and follow base company, but now they are gravell to his hart, and gall to his soule. His conscience flieth in his face, and hee is ready to sink down to hell. *Conscience* saith, these bee thy sinnes, and these will be thy damnation, they have been thy delight, but they will prove thy shame and confusion in the end, thou shalt shortly finde the smart of them. To hell; away be packing

Now this man hath no cure for his conscience but this, hee entreates *Conscience* to be quiet, hee confesseth hee hath lived in base courses, and his condition is very miserable, but now hee will reforme all; hee hath neglected prayer heretofore, but now hee will pray; hee hath hated Gods servants, but now hee will love them, his wayes have beene exceeding evil but now hee will reforme them, hee begins to turne a new leafe now and thinkes that will serve the turn. Thus many poore soules use

the meanes as Mediators , and so fall short of Christ. A gracious heart doth not onely *pray*, and *beare* , and *receiue* , and use all possible *meanes* to obtaine Christ , but hee is restlesse and unsatisfied till he enjoy and possesse Christ in the meanes. Hee rests not upon the bare performance of any duty , neither thinks by vertue of any of his endeavours, to obtaine a part in Christ.

I will expresse this particular more fully in this manner. A rich Usurer that is sicke of some disease, tell him such a Physitian can cure him , but hee stands upon state, hee will not come without a great deal of charge : Charge (saith hee) I doe not stand upon that I haue money enough by mee, *that* will fetch him hither. Such a man now placeth all his confidence in his money. So when the soule sees, the guilt of sinne is not removed , and *conscience* is still snarling, and the *Law* condemning him , and Christ is the onely Saviour, that can satisfie & cure ail. But how shall Christ be procured ? Why his *prayer*, and *fasting*, and *performances* will command him, by the power and merit of the worke done , though he hath no *promise* for it , and so by resting on his owne performances , falls short of Christ and salvation.

Oh,

Oh, saith a poore sinner, J would goe out of my selfe, and I see J rest upon my duties, but I cannot get out of my selfe. Object.

I answer, it is Satbans subtilty to keepe us in our selves here too, by endeavouring to make us goe out of our selves by our owne strength; and this is a marvailous depth of malice and cunning in the devill, when he makes us beleeve (and we out of ignorance are deluded) that wee have power in our owne hands to goe out of our selves; No, it is a supernaturall worke, and the same hand must bring us out of our selves, that must bring us to Christ: This is in truth *selfe-deniall*, when the soule knoweth it hath nothing, and therefore is over-powred with the mighty hand of God, and the worke of his Spirit, so that the poore sinner doth not so much as expect any power or ability in himselfe, or from the creature, in the doing of any duty; he knowes he is dead, and therefore cannot help himselfe, much lesse can the creature doe him good, and therefore he lookes to heaven, and seekes all sufficiency from God alone. Answer.

For (observe it) whiles that J thus thinke with my selfe, that I have ability to goe out of my selfe, I doe not then say, that I have a principle within me to deny my selfe, which is quite contrary, for to deny a mans selfe, is to know

*Selfe-deniall
what
it is.*

that he hath no power in himselfe to doe any spirituall duty, therefore we must looke onely to the voyce of Christ. and know, that hee that calls us from the wayes of darknesse, and from our selves, must also bring us to Christ; therefore expect power from Christ to plucke thee out of thy selfe, & to make thee beleewe, for the same hand doth worke both.

I would not have a poore creature thinke thus with himselfe, If this meanes and these Ordinances will doe mee no good, and will not worke upon my heart, I shall never have it; but speake thus unto God, and say, In truth Lord, I expect no power from my selfe, nor from the meanes, but my resolution is, to look up to him that hath hid his face from *Iacob*, I will not looke inward here for power, to receive it from within my selfe, nor to the Minister, nor to the meanes, but I will waite upō thee Lord, and looke up to thy power, to work by the meanes. *Who is amongst you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voyce of his servants, that walketh in darknesse, and hath no light of comfort, let him trust in the name of the Lord, & stay himselfe upon his God.* When all other things in the world faile, let the soule then looke up to the Lord, and looke out from it selfe; this is the fittest time of all to meete with God; I

*Esay, 50.
10.*

would

any ne- hee and ist; cke ve, ke ese will ve uth not ok , I re. di- pō rk eth rs, of & gs up is I ld, would have a Christian chuse this time above all times to meete his Saviour in , and this is the onely time to disappoint Sathan ; for , as I said before, it is the last refuge that the devill hath, and if he misse this opportunity , hee is for ever conquered, Thus the sinner partly seeing the beauty of grace will not, and partly seeing the basenesse of his owne heart , dares not come to Christ.

Then in the next place it is want of sense & feeling , which hee would have and cannot finde; therefore the distressed soule saith, Alas, I never knew what it was to have the assurance of Gods love , I never received any evidence of Gods favour , and shall I thinke that I have faith? They that beleeve have their hearts filled with joy unspeakable and glorious , the Word reveales this , but I am a stranger to that joy , how can I then thinke that I have any worke of faith wrought in me.

I answer , this doth not hinder either that thou hast not faith, or that thou maist not come to God by beleeving , therefore remember these three particulars. *Answer.*

1. First, thou must not thinke to have joy & refreshing before thou goe to the promise, but thou must looke for it, when thou doest chew and feed upon the promise : thou wouldst

have the Lord to give thee all the bargain before thou make the match: This joy is a fruit that proceeds from faith after much wrestling; it doth not follow from faith at the first; first beleeve, and then joy; the heart is never filled with joy before beleeving; but afterwards when thou hast had the sweet dew of the comfort of the promise many a day, then looke for this joy.

2. Secondly, know that these joyes, and this sense and feeling may be absent from faith: a man may have a good faith, and yet want the relish and sweetnesse which he longs after: A man may want his desirings, and yet want neither life nor heate: A tree may want leaves and fruit, and yet want neither sapp nor moysture: A mans faith may bee somewhat strong, when his feeling is nothing at all: *David* was justified and sanctified, and yet wanted this joy; and so *Job* rested upon GOD when hee had but little feeling, as when he saith: *Thou makest mee a Butt to shoot at; yet I will trust in thee though thou kill mee.* Therefore build not your comfort upon sense and feeling, but goe to the promise.

3. Thirdly, the Saints of God many times are deprived of comfort, not because God with-holds it, but because they put it from them.

Job 3.
15.

themselves, and will not have it, though he offer it, as *David: My soule refused comfort*, like a sullen childe, that will not eate his Milke, because hee hath it not in the golden dish: So because God doth not for you what you would, you will have nothing at all. These are the maine hinderances: I might adde many more, for carnall reason is very fruitfull this way, and wee through our owne folly and the devils subtilty, are apt to abuse things, and make them hinderances in our way to eternall happinesse. I come now to the cures of all our impediments, for if we had the wisdom and care, wee should have, we might break through them all and come to Christ. The meanes are especially foure, whereby wee may bee inwardly fortified against them, and at last be able to overcome them.

The first cure and helpe is this: We must not looke too long, nor pore too much or unwarrantably upon our owne corruptions, so farre as to be feared or disheartened from comming to the riches of Gods grace; for this is an everlasting truth, that whatsoever sight of sin unfits a man for mercy, when hee may take it, and it is offered to him, that sight of sin is ever sinfull, though it have never so faire a pretence of sorrow and deepe humiliations.

True
godly
sorrow
what it
is.

Rom. 4.
19.

liation: as we thinke many times, Had J a soule so thoroughly humbled and bruised, and so forth. The devill oft keepes us in sinne, by poring upon our sinnes, when we thinke hereby to be carried from our sinnes; That course thus is a sinfull course. Tell not me of sorrow, and repentance, and humiliation, all that sorrow and humiliation is naught that keepes a man from receiving mercy, when it is offered; See this in *Abraham*, hee had this promise, that hee should have a sonne in his old age; *He being not weake in faith regards not his old age or deadnesse, nor the barrennesse of Sarahs wombe, but beleevered in him who had promised it,* and there he rests and stayes; hee saw his body was dead, yet there was a living promise; and what though *Sarahs* wombe was barren, yet the promise was fruitfull, he knew his owne deadnesse and her barrennesse, but hee considered them not: So we must see our sinnes, and consider our many weakneses, but never so settle our selves with, or consider of them so, as to be hindered from comming to God for mercy, which hee freely offers us, and wee stand in need of, for while the soule of a man is dayly plodding upon his owne misery, and distempers, these 2 things follow.

1. First, we stop the streame of Gods promise, and let downe the sluice against it, so that the

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promise cannot come into our soules.

2. And secondly, wee set open the streame and floud-gate of corruption, and make it to runne most violently in upon us, and in the end to overwhelme us, and the inconvenience arising hereby, will slay the best Christian in the world; for what can a man get out of his corruption? Hee can have no more thereof then is there to be had; it is vaine to looke for cōfort where it is not to be had, it may dishearten us, but never incourage us, See the humility and wisdom of the woman of Canaan, *Mat. 15. 27.* shee followes Christ, but he listens not to her, but gives her the repulse, and calls her *dogge*, and saith, you *Gentiles* are *dogges*; and the Gospell of grace and Salvation is the *Childrens bread*. Now if she had onely considered the words of Christ, and onely looked into her owne basenesse, shee had never come to receiue mercy and comfort, but she saith: Truth Lord, I am a *dogge*, yet the *dogges* eate of the crummes that fall from their *Masters table*. There are 2 things here which doe expresse the frame of a gracious heart that is truly wise to attend to its owne basenesse, her *humility & wisdom*; as if she had said: Thou saist I am a *Gentile*, & a *Dog*, I cōfesse it, yet tho I am a *Dog*, I will not go out of the doores but lye under the table for mercy; So we must and

ought, when our corruptions come in upon us, and we our selves damned creatures, let us then say: In truth, Lord, I am as bad as thy word can speake, yet let us not flee away from mercy, but lie at the feete of our Saviour.

It is fit, and we ought to see our finnes, but stay not too long here; see thy finnes thou must, but not be led thereon, so as to be kept from Christ; that sight of sinne which doth not drive a man to Christ for mercy, is ever sinfull. Labour therefore to see thy finnes, thus:

How to see sinne aright. First, see thy finnes till thou see them odious and loathsome.

Secondly, till thou see an utter insufficiency in thy selfe to satisfie for them.

Thirdly, till thou hast scene an absolute necessity of Christ to succour thee; and then away speedily to the throne of Grace, and dwell no longer on thy finnes, for there is pardon enough to remove the guilt that sinne hath brought upon thy soule, there is power enough to make thee master thy corruptions. Indeed every soule should say thus: It is true Lord, my finnes are many and great, for I have departed from thee the fountaine of blisse: But shall I goe on yet further from thee, and persist in evill? God forbid. All this while
I speake

I speake to broken-hearted Christians. You prophane ones, you have your portion already, and shall have more afterwards, therefore a while stand you by, and let the Children come to their share.

The Lord looks to him that is of an humble & contrite heart, and that trembles before him. Esa. 66 2.
 poore creature cannot but observe every Open. 2.
 word, and tremble at every truth. Here is salvation indeed (saith hee) but it is not mine, here is mercy, but I have no part in it; and to hee shakes at the apprehension, concluding certainly I shall never enjoy it. Now make what the text saith: *The Lord looks at such a trembling soule*, that is, he casts sweet intimations of his goodnesse & kindnesse upon him, and saith: Thou poore trembling sinner, to thee be it spoken, I have an eye towards thee in the Lord Iesus Christ.

Comfort yee, comfort yee my people (saith the Lord) Esa. 40. 2.
speake comfortably to Ierusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, and her iniquity is pardoned, tell Ierusalem she is accepted, tell her what my minde is. So the Lord saith to his Ministers: Speake to the heart of such an humbled penitent sinner, tell him from MEE, tell him from Heaven, tell him from the Lord Iesus Christ, tell him from under the hand of
 the

the Spirit, his person is accepted, and his sins are done away, and he shall be looked upon in mercy.

Ephraim is the picture of a soule truly humbled, in whome we may see the behaviour of a true penitent towards God, and Gods dealing towards him. The Text saith, *Surely I haue heard Ephraim bemoaning himselfe* (there's the heart broken & thirsting) *thou hast chastised mee, and I was chastised, thou art the Lord my GOD, Surely after that I was turned I repented, and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh, I was ashamed, yea even confounded, because I did beare the reproach of my youth.* As if the sinner should say, I am the wretch that haue seene all the meanes of grace in abundant measure, and yet never profited under the same. The Lord hath corrected me, but I would not be tamed; He hath instructed me but I would not learne. Lord turne mee, Thou art my God; I haue nothing in my selfe; Nay, now I see the evils which before I neuer perceiued; And I observe the basenesse of my course now, which before I neuer considered; And I am ashamed of my abuse of grace revealed, I am even confounded in the sense of those abominations which my soule hath harboured.

This

Jerem.

31. 18.

19 20.

This is the mourning of a poore sinner; Now mark Gods answer: *Ephraim is my sonne, he is a pleasant childe*, for since I spake against him, I doe earnestly remember him still, therefore my bowells are troubled for him, *I will sure haue mercy upon him*. As who should say, I observed all these secrets sighes, I considered all those teares, I heard all those prayers, and tooke notice of all those complaints, and my bowels earne towards this poore sinner, that seekes to mee for mercy. And the truth is, J will embrace him with my loving kindnesse.

Now the second means of cure is this, take heed of judging thy estate by carnall reason without the rule, as thus it is the fashion of poore distressed spirits, to passe fearefull sentence upon themselves upon groundlesse arguments, and to say, I never found it, I feele no such such thing, and I feare it is not so. Thus we heare those carnal pleas which Satban helps us to invent, & we judge our selves by them: Now, I say, take heed of this, and make conscience of this same, as of any other sinne of swearing, stealing, whoring, or murder, for this is as truely a sinne as those, though not so great; Nay, it is a greater sin than you imagine. Consider this you humble-hearted Christians, for to you I speake; for when upon these

2. Help

The danger of
judging
our selves
rashly.

these grounds thou concludest thy case and estate is naught: see against how many Commandements thou sinnest.

First, thou dishonourest God and the worke of his grace; in denying that which GOD hath done for thee, & speakest *unreuerently* against God; thou art a *murderer*, and woundest thy owne soule; thou robbest thy selfe of comfort, and art a *thiefe*; and thou bearest *false witnesse* against thine owne heart, yea against Christ, and his Spirit, and the worke of grace wrought in thee, and joynest with the the devill against the Lord Christ.

But thou wilt say, I speake as I thinke. That hinders not, but that thou bearest false witness: as wee see, if a man affirme such a one is a drunkard and knowes it not, this man beares false witness, because though the man bee a drunkard, yet hee knowes it not: So thou sayest thou hast nothing, when as thou dost onely feare it, and suspect it, and the like: I speake this the rather, because of the sinfull distemper that creepes in upon the hearts of many broken hearted Christians, that out of a selfe-willd rode of carnall reason, and a vile haunt that they have got, their hearts are perswaded that they doe well to doe so, and they are never well except they doe thus.

But

But such as these (marke it) when reason is plaine, and the Scriptures are evidently against them, they doe not so much attend what the Minister saith, but they stand and invent how they may answer the Minister, and so put away their owne comforts. Let the feare of God fall upon every soule that heares this, and know that howsoever you have taken leave to you selves, and have taken up pleas against the truth, yet now goe your wayes, and mourne for it, and wonder that the Lord hath not taken away all the comfort of his grace, and all the motions of his Spirit from you.

The Prophet *David* prayed the Lord to *turne away his eyes from beholding vanitie*: now if God must doe that, then much more must hee turne away our hearts from attending to vanities: I must attend to God, and the voice of his Spirit, but to listen to those carnall pleas which I have no warrant to doe, I sinne deeply, & hurt my owne soule dangerously thereby. No man would deale with a cheator; carnall reason is a cheator, therefore let us not attend thereto, unlesse wee resolve to be cozened; and if the danger of the sinne cannot make us doe this, then let the sorow that will come by it constrain us: *Behold all you that kindle a fire, and that compasse your selves about with*

with the sparkles that yee haue kindled, this shall you haue at my hand, yee shall lie downe in sorrow I wil shew what is ment by *sparkles*, & what by *fire*; in the old Law you know there was heavenly fire continually in the Sanctuary, that shadowed out to us the will and wisdom of God in his word: but there was also strang fire that is, there were diuers sparkles of their *owne* imaginations, and conceits; every poore creature carries his tinder boxe about him, and hee is ever kindling of it; which the Lord doth not allow of: In that text are two things: first, that the heart of man will naturally invent carnall reasons and pleas against it selfe, and be settled upō them: secondly, the issue that follows thereupon: This shall yee haue of mine hand, you shall lie down in your owne sorrow. When the Scriptures are cleere, and reasons are euided, and yet you will haue your owne devises thus much I tell you, you shall lie downe in sorrow at last and you may thank your selves for it; away with your tinder-boxes therefore, abase your selves before the throne of grace and bee at length wise to salvation.

Ho euery one that thirsteth (saith God by his Prophet) *come and buy without money, take of the well of water of life, and liue for ever freely,* Many a poore Minister would faine leave his
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commodity behinde him, and saith: You must have it, and you shall have it; it is your portion, and belongs of right unto you; vve are even faine to force Gods favours upon the soule. We beseech you to beleewe, and vve intreate you for the Lord JESUS sake to receive mercy and humble your hearts.

But will any man take these favours?

No beloved, many sweet promises, and many admirable precious things of grace and salvation are revealed, but men neither passe nor care to receive benefit by them. Some carnall plea or other evades all. This argues plainely your smal estimation of CHRIST. A poore hungry sinner that is apprehensive of his ovvne vveaknesse and feeblenesse, longs till the *feast-day* commeth, that hee may partake these delicacies. Oh how carefully will hee listen; and how diligently will hee attend what the Minister saith; and if the Word comes home to his conscience inlightning his heart, and reprovng him of his secret corruption, he cries out, I am in great trouble, good Lord comfort me: I am full of doubts, good Lord resolve me: I am ignorant in spirituall things, good L. teach me: I have a proud, stout, stubborn heart, good L. humble me. Take this for a generall rule, A good heart is allwayes at
C best ease,

ease, when the Word workes most. But a wicked gracelesse person is then best, when the Word workes least upon him. Therefore when he thinkes the Minister will come close to his soule, hee will not bee at home that day, he will be sure to be out of Towne, he knowes the Word would awake n him, and affright him, and hee cannot beare the blow, therefore hee keeps away, and shunneth the hearing of Gods Word, which would worke upon him.

3. *Help.* But thirdly, let us be marvellously wary & watchfull, that wee enter not into the lists of dispute with Sathan, upon those points which are beyond the reach of man; as thus to say, I am not elected, therefore GOD will not doe me good, it is vaine for mee to use the meanes; my time of mercy is gone, oh the day of grace that I have seene the Lord knocked sweetly, and was pleased to reveale my finnes at such a time: but then hard-hearted wretch that I was, I shut the doore of my heart against the Lord IESUS CHRIST, and now it is gone and past, now there is no hope for ever of receiving mercy againe: If the devill get thee here, all thy comfort is gone, for upon this ground a man shall never receive rest to his heart while the world stands; for if no man
can

can ever know the thing, how shall I be able to give, or any man to take comfort? Looke as it is with a poore travelling man that lighteth among theeves; who come and promise to cary him a neerer way, and at last they bring him into a wood vvhether no passengers come, and there they doe what they will with him: So it is vvith a poore soule, vvhen the devill gets him into these secret disputes of Gods eternall counsell, there are no passengers come this vvay, therefore thou art voide of succour, and Sathan may exercise his pleasure in terrifying thy poore soule. Therefore for your direction in this case observe three rules.

1. First, let the Soule in this case stay it selfe upon the the almightinesse of the power of God, *I am God all sufficient*: if thou art perswaded of the al.sufficiency of GOD, this will helpe thee: God can doe more than thou canst thinke. Hee is able, and will doe thee good, though thou know it not; and therefore observe thus much, the soule never doubts of Gods will, but it doubts of his power also in some measure.

2. Secondly, check thine owne heart for meddling with Gods secrets, and prying into his hidden counsels; let no man goe beyond his bounds: It appertaines not to thee to dive

Deut. into this mystery. *Secret things belong to God,*
29.29. *but revealed things belong to us:* and *Who hath*
1. Cor. *knowne the mind of God,* saith *Paul.* Mark this,
2. 16.

you that will be going up into the skies to know what Gods secret minde is, keepe your statiō wisely, for the devil & all the devills in hel never knew the minde of the Lord. Whē *Ionas* 4. 19. *Ionas* cried against Niniveh, saying, within forty dayes all you drunkards, and adulterers shal be destroyed: marke there how the King stayes himselfe, saying, Who cā tell if the Lord will repent and stay his fierce wrath that we perish not. When the devill tells thee thus and saith, God hath appointed a way to salvation, and you have had the meanes, and did not profit by them, therefore God will never shew you mercy. nor giue you grace: how cā the devil tel that? nay, all the devills in hell cannot tell: let mee walke in that course which God hath appointed and commanded, and doe that vvhich I ought, and let me say, vvhō knowes but God may breake the heart of a proud rebellious sinner, none but God knowes it.

Thirdly, Measure not the riches of Gods love, and the sweetnesse of his grace according to your ovne conceits, and do not thinke that becausc you cannot conceiue it, therefore
Esay 55
7.89. God vvill not do it: *Let the wicked forsake his*
ways

wayes, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, saith the Prophet : that is, All you wicked ones, and you that have lived leudly, returne from your wicked wayes, and from your vaine imaginations, for he will abundantly pardon.

But will the Lord pardon all my sinnes, *Object.*
saith the soule, I cānot think it, If I were a God I should never passe by such intolerable things.

And because you cannot, you thinke God *Answer.*
cannot : Yes, saith the Lord, I can abundantly pardon, for my thoughts are not your thoughts nor my wayes as your wayes. A poore creature thinkes his sinnes are unpardonable, and he shall never get assurance of Gods love. You are *men*, saith the Lord, and have finite thoughts, but I am *God*, and have mercy infinitely, when you thinke I have no mercy.

But there were never any such received to mercy, saith the soule, and therefore why should I be the man? *Object.*

VWhen CHRIST had wrought many strange *Answer.*
miracles, the people said, there were never any such things done in Israel ; And therefore it is plaine, God can doe things that never were done the like: *He doth great things past finding* *Iob 9. 10*
out, and wondrous without number, saith *Iob* : therefore judge not Gods power and love by what thou canst conceive.

The best Christians are most suspicious of themselves, and none fuller of doubts & feares, then those that haue least cause to feare their estates are bad. Sathan makes it his chiefe worke to grieve and terrifie thele: And their owne distrustfull hearts are alwayes raising false surmises, and putting mercy from them, as if they were hired by the devill, to take his part in pleading against themselves. Therefore it is worth our observing what *David* saith *Psal.* 42. *The Lord shall command his loving kindnesse in the morning.* It is a phrase taken from *Princes* and great Commanders, whose words are a Law. So God will send forth his loving kindnesse to a truly humbled Christian with a *command*. As if he should say, *Goe love and everlasting mercy*, take thy Commission, and I charge thee goe to that poore broken-hearted sinner, goe to that poore, hungry, and thirsty soule: goe and prosper and prevaile, and setle my love upon his heart, whether he will or no. Thus the Lord charges his loving kindnesse to doe good to poore sinners, and by his owne Almightinesse stayeth the Soule, when it is ready to sinke under the burthen of its transgressions.

Object. What, shall I have mercy? No, No, saith the doubting heart:) Will the Lord Iesus accept

cept me? No surely. Could I pray so, and had I these parts, and could I performe duties after this and this manner, then there were some hope, but alas there is no mercy for me.

Let mee tell thee who ever thou art, God *Ans.* invites thee in particular, and all the sweetnesse in Christ, and his precious promises, appertaine to thy soule, and thou hast as great an interest in them, as any servant of God in the world whatsoever.

No, No, saith the trembling soule, I cannot *Object.* beleeve it; such a wretch as I goe to heaven It cannot be; heaven, shall rather fall then I come there. Thus, the discouraged sinner knocks off mercy, and shuts the doore against himselfe.

Now when all carnall reasonings, and high imaginations, (as *Paul* calls them) have raised up strong holds against mercy and comfort; when the word cannot for the present settle peace in the soule, God is faine at last to command loving kindnesse, and send him vvith a Commission from heaven, saying, I charge you, breake open the doore of the heart of such a sinner, rend that vaile of ignorance that is before his eyes, silence all his doubts and feares; And I charge you, go home to that soule, & cheere it, refresh it with the sense of my favour, and fill it with the assurance of my love.

Rom. 5. *Whiles we were enemies*, saith the Apostle, *Christ died for us.* The Lord sends from Heaven to a poore miserable creature, Commend my love, commend my mercy to such a distressed soule, & tell him though he hath beene an enemy to mee, yet I am a friend to him. Tell him though hee hath beene a Traytour to mee, I have beene a good King to him. Hee hath beene a rebell to mee, but tell him I have beene a loving GOD to him. Tell him his sinnes are pardoned, his person accepted, and his soule shal be saved. Tell him his sighes and groanes are heard, and his prayers observed in Heaven; let him know that the Lord Iesus died for sinners when they were sinners. Make this good to his soule I charge you before you come back.

4. *Helpe.* Therefore the fourth cure is this, and it is specially to bee observed above all in proceeding with thy selfe in judgement; that is, Passe no sentence against thy soule, but according to the evidence of the VVord: if thou art to be approved, let the word of GOD approve thee, and let his word examine thee, if thou art to be examined; if the VVord speake for thee, it is no matter though all men and Angels speake against thee; and if the word condemne thee, it is no matter who speakes for thee: what
though

though some wrangling rayler step in, and will be determining the causes before the Judges comes; yet a wise man will stay till the Judge comes, and wait his leisure. Deale thou so with thine owne soule, put not the case to be tryed by a company of peevish carnall reasons, but stay till the word come, and judge thy selfe by that, and hold to that for ever. *The light is that which manifesteth all things*; the meaning is this, the light of the word, and the evidence of Gods truth manifested to the soule of Gods people; all sense and feeling of carnall reasoning, are like fogges and mists which make a man that hee cannot see the way; but bring him to the light, and then his state and condition will be manifested what it is. *Learne of me* (saith our Saviour) *and you shall find rest to your soules*: And the Psalmist saith, *I will enquire what the Lord will say*: So say thou, I will not hearken what carnall reason will say. The want of this is the cause why we have so many distractions and disquietments, and are still in doubtings, because he that teacheth us is a deluder.

For the poore soule saith, VVhat, shall I have an interest in Christ, shall I have title to the promises? Nay, this belongs to those that are broken-hearted; indeed if I had such pow-

er against corruption, such heavenly mindedness, and this and that, there were some hopes, but I am so full of weaknesse, and many times led captive by my rebellious heart; that it is too apparent I never had saving grace, nay, I feare I never shall have it truly wrought in my soule.

But who told you so, and where learned you this Religion? I am sure you never learned it of Christ. VVho, or, what word tells you, If I have such corruptiōs, I shal never have grace? not the word of Christ, I am sure: wherefore I charge you hold to the truth of the word; Learne of *me*, saith *Christ*, and put not your cause to bee decided by carnall reason, nor hearken what it telleth you; for if you take that course, you shall never come to Christ whilst the world standeth: Learne of the Lord Christ, for his word is faithfull, and his promise sure, and ther you shall finde rest as strong as Mount Sion; it is that word whereby thou shalt be judged at the great day, when sense & feeling shall be cast out for wranglers, and never come into Court. Thus much of the foure cures: I will now propound foure rules how a man may order himselfe aright in this course, so that he may repaire to the word at all times, as he ought to doe, and gaine evidence

there

there for establishing his heart in peace and tranquility.

*Rules to direct a Christian how to use the
Word of God for the evidence of his
assurance.*

First, to use the word of God aright : as *Rule 1.*
thou must in all conditions that concerne thy
soule repaire to the Word, so thou must con-
sider thine owne uprightnesse, and what
work of grace is in thy soule, that will answer
the word, and testifie that the worke of grace
is true : Be sure to take thy soule at the best;
doe not alwayes consider what is the worst
part in thee, nor thy failings that may accuse
thee onely, but if there be any uprightnesse
that may speake for thee, heare that also; It is
injustice for any Court to heare one side, and
not another : The Lord doth not lie at catch
with his children, but he takes them at the
best : as *Rom. 4. 22.* it is said that *Abraham be-
lieved the promise, and it was imputed to him for
righteousnesse*: yet in the 12. of *Gen.* we see hee
had some doubtings, but God tooke him at the
best, and so records this of his faith. So we
see that *Sarah* is spoken of as a gracious wo-
man, and a patterne for women in calling her
hus.

1. Pet.

3. 6.

Gen. 18.

12

husband *Lord* which was a signe of an humble heart ; but yet we reade that she derided the message of the Lord by the Angeil ; yet notwithstanding the Lord buries that , and onely mentions the other in the commendation of her. Now as the Lord deales with his servants, so must we deale with our selves , whatsoever is found sincere and upright , observe that as well as the other , nay rather before the other. If a man should have his cause handled in any Court after this fashion, and they should onely observe the failings in his cause , the best cause may happily go against a man, therefore the Court will heare all read; as if any Bond or Bill come in, or any matter of agreement, they will heare all : If a man have an Indenture, and the Lawer onely opens and reads the failings in it , and that which seemes to make against the party, if the Iudge onely heare that, it must needes goe against him , and therefore the man saith, Good my Lord heare all : and when they finde it written that such a debt is paid, and the party satisfied , then the cause goes well ; whereas if they had heard onely the first part, and not the second , hee had lost all. So , many bring in great inditelements against themselves, and say, Oh what pride and stubbornnesse is in my heart , oh how weake

am I, and dull, and dead, and backward to
holy duties? How carelesse of injoying
communion with GOD? How negligent
in sitting and trying my owne heart, in wat-
ching over my senses, and mourning in secret
for my daily failings? It is true, but art thou
not troubled with these, and is it not the grea-
test griefe of thy soule that lies upon thee?
Yea, saith the poore soule, I confesse my heart
is weary of these, and I could bee content to
bee any thing, that I could not bee thus: Now
take thy soule on this side, and heare the best
part: as it is with a mans hand and the staffe,
I compare the promise to a staffe, you know
the backe of a mans hand cannot take hold
of the staffe, but let him turne the palme of
his hand to the staffe, and then hee can take
it: So turne thou the right side of thy soule
to the promise, and then thou maist take it;
But we turne the back-side of our hearts to the
promise, when the soule saith, Oh my stub-
bornesse is great, and mine inabilities and
corruptions are many; This is the wrong side
of thine heart, and this will ever hinder thee
from taking hold of the promise: But thy soule
hates these, and is weary of them; this is the
right side of the heart, turne that to the pro-
mise.

Second.

Rule 2. Secondly, Labour to have thy conscience settled and established in that truth which now out of the Word thou hast gotten, to beare witnesse of the work of grace in thee; For if there bee any want of the assurance of Gods love, and if the evidence of the worke of grace come not powerfully in upon thy heart, but there is some guilt of sinne still remaining, then conscience will breed new broiles, and continually nip and disquiet the heart; Therefore as we must have our judgemēt informed by the Word that there is some good in us, so we must get conscience perswaded of it, that conscience may speake for us: as the debtor, if he bee indebted to many creditors, he must agree with all; for if hee agree with all save one, that one may imprison him as well as all the rest: So it is with the poore distressed soule that lies at the mercy of the Lord, and is so deepe in arerages that he cannot helpe himselfe, he must labour to stil conscience, that it doe not accuse him, but be on his side.

The want of this is the cause why new suits and new bills are daily put up against us, one-ly because conscience is not pacified; Take a poore sinner that hath all his doubts and objections answered, come to him, and say: Are
all

all these all your doubts and objections? yes: & are they all answered? yes: & have you now any thing to say against that which hath beene made knowne unto you: No not now. Say to him againe: Did your conscience say to you, it is a sinne to say you have no grace? Now here hee demurres and stayes, and saith, No I dare not say so, but I rather say the contrary. Marke this, all the bookes are crost, and all objections answered, and yet conscience puts in a new plea, because it was not satisfied.

Now come to him againe, and say, You are sometimes captived by sinne, but you are willing to bee at Gods disposing, and that hee should plucke away all those corruptions, are you not?

Oh, saith the poore sinner, I must needs yeeld to that; then I affirme to thy soule, this is a worke of true grace: Therefore let conscience bee fully satisfied, and cancell all selfe-accusations; This will cleare the heart, and cast out all cavills that come in against us: *For if our consciences condemne us not, then wee have boldnesse towards God:* we must marke conscience, and bee convinced, that it is a sinne to say, God hath not wrought this worke of grace in our hearts: For though sense and feeling bee

some-

sometimes gone, yet conscience remembers the day a cleare evidence of Gods love, and faith. Lord thou knowest it, and thou didst say out of thy VVord at such a time that my heart was upright and sincere in thy sight.

It should bee with a poore sinner, as it is with a wise man when he would make his lands sure unto him and his posterity by evidences and writings, he is not content onely to have his evidences in his owne keeping, but will have them inrolled in Chancery, such a yeare, and such a day, that if hee may be sure to finde them againe there: so it should bee with distressed soules, wee should not only bee content to have all our objections answered, but get them recorded in the Court of *Conscience*, that when sense and feeling is lost, yet wee may readily goe to the Court of *Conscience*, and there finde the day and yeare when Gods love was made sure to us.

Thirdly, we should strive mightily to have our hearts over-powred with the evidence which reason and conscience makes good to us, that so we may quietly receive it, and calmly welcome it, and yeeld and subject our hearts to the truth. But heare wee all sticke, for there are three things in the soyle of a man which maintain these quarrells and oppositions
against

against the evidence of the Word: 1. Reason objects: 2. Conscience accuseth: 3. The Will of man will not submit : and wee finde it in experience that when a man hath stilled conscience, and answered all reasons, yct the stubbornesse of the heart maintaines a gaine-saying against the truth, and keepes the olde quarrell that hath beene answered long agoe, and that a man would thinke had been buried long since. It is in this case with a poore sinner, as it is with a man that hath a contentions adversary; happily the caule that they two have in hand hath bene tryed in all the Courts of England, and at last comes to Chancery, and there it is concluded against him; so that all things are settled and ended, as a man would thinke, and an honest man would sit downe and bee quiet: but the other being a puarrel some fellow will not yeeld yet, but to the old law he will againe, and hee wiil sell all he hath but hee will have his will; till at the last the Iudge comes to take notice of this man, and casts out the cause, and puts him in prison, and saith. These things were all answered, and the cause ended long agoe.

Just so for all world is it with the heart of a gracious man that is humbled in some measure, and could bee content to yeeld to the cre-

dit of Gods word, and to the witnesse of his conscience, and saith, My condition is better then I thought it was, but there is an old proud self-willed heart that will not bee quiet, but still ~~is~~ quarrellsome, and maintaines the old quarrell; Though reasons are all confuted, and conscience beares witnesse against him and every Minister casts out the cause; yet observe it, a poore distressed sinner will keepe the old objections, and though they were answered the night before, yet hee will have them fresh the next morning, and the next moneth, even when a man would think he should not dare to come in Court; and the mischief lies even here, in a proud self-willed heart that will not yeeld. Therefore labour to get thy heart so far over-powred with the authority of the truth, whatsoever it is that God reveales to thee for thy good, and doe not reject the evidence which God makes knowne and passeth upon thy soule for thy everlasting well-fare, doe not (I say) reject it: and because thou hast not that comfort that thou wouldest, therefore thou wilt have none at all: it is not properly because thou canst not, but because thou wilt not receive the promise, that so wracks and torments thy spirit: this is it which breeds the quarrell: and hence it is that when reason is
satisfi-

satisfied, and conscience convinced, ask the soul this question, and say, are you perswaded that the Lord hath done you good, and will shew everlasting mercy to your soule? no (saith hee) all the world shall not perswade mee of that; Ministers are mercifull, and Christians are charitable, and are loth to discourage mee, as I should doe to them, but did they know me indeed they would never thinke thus of me, certainly I shall never finde it so: What I grace? all the world shall never perswade mee to it. Marke what I say, this is meere thy pride and selfe-wildnesse that will not receive that good which God is willing to give thee, this hellish and devillish pride of thine will cost thee deare one day.

But will some say, How is it pride? wee are *Object.* ever complaining and condemning our selves, this cannot be pride.

Yes I say it is abominable pride, against the *Answer.* Majesty of heaven; and that I will shew these two ways: First for a man to follow his owne conceits and selfe wildnesse against the truth, and the force of reason, and the witnesse of the servants of GOD, & his owne conscience, is not this pride?

Secondly, thy pride appeares in this, namely, because thou hast not what thou wouldest,

and in that manner and measure thou desirest, and hast not that sweetnesse of grace and conquest over corruption that thou wouldst have, therefore thou flingest away all Gods kindnesse; this in infinite pride : That measure of mercy which God hath already shewed thy soule, is incomprehensible, and yet because you cannot have what you would, you will have nothing at all. As a man that hath the Law on his side, and his estate seiled on him, yet because his evidences are not written in great huge letters, and in large paper, he throwes them all away : so you have no grace, because you have not so much as you would have; you have no humility, because you have not so much humility: Oh pride, pride, in the highest degree.

Labour therefore to bring thy heart to this blessed subjection to the truth of God, and make it thy duty as well to receive comfort when God offers it upon good grounds, as to doe a duty commanded, and know that it is a sinne to reject mercy when God offers it, as to kill a man which God hath forbidden; and therefore you Saints of God that have beene persecuted thus, and have beene enemies to your selves, when your hearts begin to slide away thus, take your hearts and reason thus with
your

your soules , and say , Good Lord, this is the proud stubborne distemper of this vile heart of mine; what would I have? is not Gods word cleare , and my conscience satisfied ? doe not the Ministers of God affirme my state to bee good? and shall I thus dishonour God?

But what saith the poor soule againe, Must I eate mine owne words, and say I have grace, when before I said I had none? *Object.*

Yes , and bee thankfull to God that thou maist say so too ; it is better for you to crosse your owne humours , than crosse Gods Spirit: take notice of it , and feare for ever , lest that groud & stubborne soule of thine, which now refuseth consolation when God offers it , be forced to eate thy flesh , and come npon thy knees, and never get comfort to thy dying day; and though God save thee in the end, yet thou shalt be as it were in hell upon earte. *Answer.*

One would have thought it had beene humility in *Peter* to refuse to let *Christ* wash his feete , but it was nothing but pride, and therefore *Christ* takes him up for it sharply, (which is indeed the onely way to cure this distemper) *If I wash thee not thou hast no part in me :* if you *Ioh. 13. 8.* will needs have your owne humours, and will not be perswaded, you may get you downe to hell with them : *Peter* paused with himselfe a

while, but at last whē his stomack came down, then, *Lord, not onely my feet, but my hands and heart and all.* It is humility of heart to take what God offers. Most Christians thinke they are humblehearted, but they are so farre proud, as they give leave to this distemper: therefore labour to overmaster this gaine-saying heart of thine, with the authority of the Word of God, and learne to receive mercy when God offers it, lest he take away the comfort of his Spirit from you, and make you goe howling and roaring to your graves. Though he bring you to Heaven in the end, yet you may have a Hell before you come thither.

Rule 4. The last Rule is this: Maintaine the good word which thy heart hath submitted to, and keepe it as the best treasure under Heaven; and when thou hast obtained certaine evidence that thy estate is good, heare nothing against it, but stick fast to the same, regard nothing but out of the vvord of God, against that comfort and evidence of thy salvation, which thou hast been perswaded of by the word; if Satan or carnall reason have any thing to say against thee, let them bring Scripture, and then yeeld to it, but vvithout the vvord heare nothing. Looke as it is vvith a man that is at law for lands, if he have his adversary on the hip, and

and have gotten some advantage against him, hee will keepe him there, and hold him to the point. If a man will follow every wrangling Lawyer at every impertinent out-straying, he will never have any good successe; It is the fashion of many Attornies rather to breed quarrels, than to end them; And therefore hold to the maine point. Deale with Sathan as with a subtil adversary that is full of wiles and fetches. It is the cunning of the enemy to lead you out, and hee will have many vagaties, but be sure to hold to that truth which you have received from the evidence of the word, and the witnesse of conscience. When a man hath gotten some comfort, then the devill begins to play the Lawyer in this manner.

Doeſt thou not ſee how weake and poore thou art? How deſtitute of all ſaving grace, and how contrary thou walkeſt to God? *Sathan*

*How the Soule being tempted may answer
Sathans accusations.*

It is true (ſaith the Soule) yet it is as true that hee that confeſſeth and forſaketh his ſin, ſhall have mercy. *Sinner*

But (ſaith the Devill) doeſt thou not ſee that thou art full of pride and weakneſſe, and ſecretly unwilling to come to duties? *Sathan*

It is true (saith the soule) I am so, yet I hate & desire to forsake this, therefore shall finde mercy, the word saith so.

Sathan. But (saith the devill) are you of Gods Counsell, secret things belong to God?

Sinner. Indeed (saith the soule) I know not what Gods secret will is, yet this I know that the word saith, Hee hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but invites such daily to come unto him.

Sathan. But (saith the devill) many cozen themselves, mercie is a great thing, and few obtaine it, and why may not you be cozened as well as others?

Sinner. But (saith the soule) the Lord will not cozen mee, and the Lord knowes my heart, and the word knowes what the Lord knowes.

Sathan. But (saith the devill) may not you be deceived in the word; the word is true indeed, but how know you that you rightly apply it, and that the word and your heart doth sure together?

Sinner. Why (saith the soule:) I desire as earnestly to have my sinne purged, as I doe to have it pardoned. I know my heart by the word, and to the word I repaire, and the Lord knowes that I hate all siune inwardly, and reforme it outwardly, and therefore I know I shall finde
mer-

mercy: shew mee a place of Scripture that saith I doe not rightly apply the word, and I will beleeve it; but I will not beleeve thee, for thou art a deluder and a lyar.

Thus hold to the word, and the devill will be tyred, and goe away: keepe you here, for if he catch you a wandring after sense and feeling, you are gone. *Thou through thy Commandements hast made me wiser than mine enemies,* Psal. 119. 98. saith David, for they are ever with me. Sathan is wise; and the flesh, and carnall reason, and the world are wise; but blessed be our God that makes every poore ignorant servant of his wiser then al these: but how? the word must be ever with them; you must keepe the word with you daily, and that will make you not know onely what is amisse, but get ground against whatsoever hinders your peace.

Sathan deales in this with the soule, as the enemy deales in warre vwhen Iosua defeted Josh. 3. 19. the men of Ai, he got them out of the Citie, and then they that lay in ambush vent and tooke it in, and burnt it vwith fire: so the devill doth: Our Castle or Citie is the promises, and the vvord, and ordinances of God. novv if the devill can but get you out of this Castle, he hath you vvhere he vvould; if you vvill looke after every bird that flyes, and listen after eve-

ry carnall reason and temptation, you are gone; if he once get you from the promise, he will in tangle you in his snare and overcome you.

- 1 Ioh 2.* *Little Children, if yee abide in Gods Commandments, ye abide in God,* saith the Apostle: As if he had said, Children, your enemies are many, and great, and cunning, therefore keep home keep home, come not abroad, and then you shall be safe, whatsoever troubles arise. It is the fashion of parents, if their children runne abroad and catch a knock, they tell them that they are well enough served, you might have kept home when you had warning.

The issue of this point is this, Judge thy soule by the word, and looke upon thy sacred part, and let that beare witness for thee, and what the word of God doth evidence to thee, that maintaine, and heare nothing against it; this is the way to receive constant comfort, and goe on merrily in our Christian course: let quarrels, troubles, and temptation come, yet keepe you within doores, and rest your selves upon the riches of Gods free grace in Jesus Christ, and bee for ever comforted, and you may go singing to Heaven, and to your graves, though you meet with never so many temptations and oppositions.

Meanes to obtaine an interest in the Promises.

Now I will shew you some meanes whereby a man may so improve his time, that at last hee may obtaine this blessed estate; which are foure; But before I do begin with them, you must be advertised of this much, that we may use the meanes, but there is no meanes under Heaven *alone* will doe it, yet you must wait upon God in the use of the meanes, for it is not the meanes that will worke faith, but the Spirit of God in the use of the meanes; and therefore the Text saith, *To you it is given to beleeve*, for Faith is the free gift of God; It is God that must doe it, and yet hee will not doe it without us, because we are reasonable men and women. The Lord affords us meanes, and therefore we are to waite upon him in the use of those meanes; Let the Lord doe what hee will, and let us doe what we should: we must not thinke when we have the meanes then we can get faith presently, for as *Paul* saith, *The same power that raised up Iesus from the dead* *Eph. i. 20.* *must make us able to beleeve*, or else all the Angels in Heaven, and all the Ministers on Earth, and all the helpe that men

and meanes can doe thee , will doe thee no good : The meanes are diuers, as hearing and prayer, which are the Conduits whereby God communicates faith; But I let those passe, and onely fasten upon those which are needfull for feeble Christians to bring them into this blessed state, and those are these.

I. Means.

First, we must, as much as in us lies, labour to plucke away all those props that the soule leanes upon, and all those outvard succours, and vwhatsoever outvard contentment it is, vvhich a poore sinner doth repaire and betake himselfe to for reliefe and helpe, that vwhen all these are taken from us, vve may bee forced to goe for succour there vvhether it is to be had. It is that vvhich remaines in the nature of man, and that vvhich is naturall to us all even from our first Parents , that vve vould have the staffe in our ovne hands, and support our owne soules , and supply all those necessities that lie upon us.

Now the way to make the soule leane upon CHRIST, is, to plucke away all other props; For the last thing that wee come to is the promise, and if we could finde good any where else, we would never goe to Christ; God heares last of us, and therefore wee should doe with our selves as the enemy doth with a Citie besieged,

sieged, when hee would make them yeeld, the onely way is to famish them, cut off all provision, and stop all passages, that none may come to relieve them, and then they will bee forced to yeeld themselves to the mercy of the enemy; So it is with our nature, wee are still trusting to our owne strength, and relying upon something of our own; Therefore famish thy heart, and cut off all the meanes and comfort whereby thy heart may be succoured, & thy conscience quieted, and when thy heart is famished, it will then seeke out to a Saviour, and lie there, because there is no other thing to support it.

The poore woman in the Gospell had spent all her goods upon the Physitians, and if she had had but a litle meanes left, yea, but one farthing token, for any thing I know, shee would never have gone to Christ; but when all these failed, then shee was forced to seeke to Christ, that was ready and willing to doe any thing for her distressed nature: So our soules must have something to support themselves upon, for they cannot live without some support. Now therefore when all our carnall hopes are taken away, wee must needs stay upon the promise, because we have nothing else. It is not required that a man should

should cast away those outward comforts that GOD afford him, but onely this, that though you have all, yet labour to get your heart to see and acknowledge the emptinesse of all these, and let not the heart seeke to much content in them, for these are all but lying vanities, and broken staves, which will not onely cozen a man, but pierce him too.

Now vvhhen the soule seeth these things cannot succour him, but lay him in the dust, then he will be content to have his heart severed from them. It is with the Soule as it was with *Noahs Dove*, when the *Arke* began to rest upon the Mountaine of *Arraret*, *Noah* sent out the *Dove*, but the *Dove* found no rest for the sole of her foot: No question there were many dead carcases, but the *Dove* found no rest till she came to the *Arke* againe; So when a man findes no rest in any thing the creature affords, and can get no footing for the soule to stay it selfe upon them, then it betakes it selfe to Christ, and goes home to the promise, and rests there, and expects from thence what is needfull, as in the Art of swimming, he that will swimme, must plucke his feete ^{from} the bottome, and commit himselfe ^{to} the streame to beare him up; So vve must plucke our hearts from these things, and them from

us;

us; And though vve have honour and preferments, yet vve must not put any confidence in them, but learne by our beleeving to commit our selves vvholly to the povver of the promise, and receive comfor from thence onely.

Let not the Gods of this World, *honour*, and *profit*, and *pleasure* deceive thee; Did the pride of *Pharaohs* heart deliver him? Did the riches of *Dives* save him? Did *H rods* applause that he had, deliver him? Did these gods secure them? Nay, have they not left thē in the lurch? Therefore let us take our hearts off from these things, and have a bafe esteeme of them, and see a vanity, and emptinesse, and insufficiency in them, that wee may bee forced to seeke to Christ, and say as *David* said, *Helpe Lord, for vaine is the helpe man.*

Labour therefore to see the privie pranks of thine owne heart, and hunt out all those mazes, and turnings & windings of thy spirit, for it is wonderful to see how the soule is ready to hang her comforts upon every hedge, & shifte & shank in every by-corner for comfort: Now when thou seest thy heart thus seeking to settle itselfe, pluck away that prop, and see the emptinesse of it, and then thy heart
will

will bee fit and ready to goe unto Christ.

2. Means.

Now when this is done there is a little way made that the promise may come to the soul, therefore labour in the second place to have your hearts possessed throughly, and perswaded effectually of the fulnesse of that good which is in the promise, and of that satisfactory mercy and freenesse of the grace of God in Christ, that so the soule may be establisht with that full content which is to bee had in the riches of the promise. But marke what I say, perswade your heart of it, and content not your selves that you are able to dispute somewhat fully of the excellency of the promise and of the riches of Gods free grace; VVhat is this to the purpose that the heart knowes this, and yet is fore-stalled that it comes not to the promise? Therefore leave not thy heart till it come to make that account of the promise, that the word saith it is worth; I say, leave not thy heart till thou see the promise of grace most beautifull in thy eye, and that thy heart may gaine some earnest touching the goodnesse of God, and the riches of his grace towards thee; and bring thy heart to know and see, that the promise is better than all the riches and honours that thou canst have, or the world can

Psal. 9.

10. bestow, They that know thee will trust in thee,

for

for thou Lord hast never failed them that seeke thee: This kinde of knowledge ever breeds confidence and resolution, and perswades the heart; Wee dare trust a friend whose faithfulness we have tryed; and rest upon that which we know by experience. The promises are of a tryed Truth; Seeke from one end of the Heaven to the other, turne all the Bible over, and see if ever any man leaned on the promise, and the Lord did not performe that which he had promised for the good of his soule? *Except the Lord had bene my delight, I should have perished in my troubles (saith David.) My flesh faileth, and my heart also, but thou art the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.* Here lyes a great vveight, and it is a worke of marvellous difficulty and great necessity, and therefore that thy heart may sit downe satisfied in the sufficiency of the promise, I will propound three rules how you may improve the promise for your uttermost benefit.

Ps. 119.

92.

Ps. 73.

26.

First, labour daily to present to thy Soule a greater good in the promise than thou canst see any vvhether else: It is a mans skill, and it should bee his endeavour daily to dogge his heart, and to looke vvhether it is that the heart desires most, and present a greater good to thy

How to improve the promises for our benefit.

soule therein, than in all things thou canst have elsewhere. Wee should deale with our hearts as a man would doe with a corrupt Justice, when hee would have him to be on his side, the onely way is to bribe him; (though that is sinfull) yet it is good to bribe the corrupt heart with the goodnesse of the promise; that the heart may cleave to it, & long after it. Doe honours, or riches, or the applause of men, or any earthly pleasures offer thee content and satisfaction? then perswade thy heart there is a greater worth and excellency in the promise then can bee had in all the world. Here is an *exceeding waight of glory*, hee that hath this promise shall be made a *King*, and shall have glory that will *never vanish*: doth thy heart hanker after earthly joy and mirth? thou shalt finde a greater mirth in the promise, then in the crackling of these thornes; (and so I may say of any thing else) Doth thy heart hanker after riches? then tell thy heart that there are *unsearchable riches in Christ*, and through him we have title to all the promise of this life and a better; we know he that offers most for the bargaine hath it: therefore wee should observe the goings out of our hearts, and what offers it selfe to give us most content, and present our soules with a greater good in
God

God then in in all things else.

Oh the height, and depth, , and length, and breadth of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge!

The consideration of this, as it works a longing after Christ, and the promises, so it should fill our faces with shame and confusion, that ever we should set light by such riches of mercy, and walke unworthy of so great salvation. Could wee comprehend the unmeasurable diemensions of Gods love and goodnesse revealed in his word, how would our hearts be enflamed towards him? Whē the sinner thinks thus with him'selve, I that have done all that I could against so good a God, that my heart even bleeds to thinke of it, there was no name under heaven that I tore in pieces but Gods name, his wounds, and life, and heart-blood I have rent and torne a thousand times. Nay, there was no command in the world that my soul so much despised, as the command of the Lord Jesus. There was no spirit that ever speake to me, which I so much resisted as the Spirit of the Lord. Oh how many sweet motions hath the Lord let into my soul, thereby to pluck mee from my base courses and sinfull practises! By how many mercies hath he allured me, by how many gracions promises hath he invited me, to

for sake my sinnes, and turne unto him? But I have flowne in the face of his *Ministers* and *blessed spirit*, and rejected all tearmes of reconciliation. If I had lyen in a dungeon, and been plagued with torments all my life time, yea, though I had another world full of misery to live in, I should count it infinite mercy, so the Lord would passe by my sinfull miscarriages, and pardon these inward rebellions.

But that God should send his dearest *Sonne* to love mee, and that so incomparably, so inconceivably, that I could not possibly hate him, so much as he loves and affects mee, I could not so exceede in unkindnesse towards him, as hee hath exceeded in tender compassion towards mee? Were it not righteous with God, never to speake comfort more to my soule, that have so lightly esteemed his promise and word of comfort? Had it not beene just with GOD to take advantage against mee? Was it not just that I vvhich lived in sinne, should have perished in my sin? Had it not bee just that I who have so much loved corruption, should have reaped the bitter fruit of it long ere this? But, that the Lord should finde an enemy, and not slay him; nay that he should give his beloved *Son* out of his bosom to save him; is love not to be expressed. Oh
the

the *height* of this mercy beyond my desire, Oh
the *breadth* of this mercy without all bounds.
Oh the *length* of this mercy beyond all times.
Oh the *depth* of this mercy beyond all *sine*
and misery!

Labour therefore to have accessse to the
promise with thy soule, and speake a good
word for it, and say, Stand by profits, and plea-
sures, and preferments, roome for the Lord Je-
sus Christ, and put a wonderfull price upon
the promise; This is an everlasting rule, what-
soever the soule doth account as best, that it
will chuse and leave all others for it. I would
have the soule out bid the world, and labour to
out-shoot the devill in his owne bow, & those
things which the devill casts in thy way, for
hindering thy soule from comming to the pro-
mise, let those things be as meanes to usher
in the promise. As thus, when thou see'st thy
heart looke after friends, let those friends
usher the way to thinke on the infinite love &
favour of God in Christ; And when thy heart
would faine hunt after wealth, let this usher
a way to the promise, and say, If the heart find
such a content in riches, what would it finde
in the riches of Gods grace in Christ? Thus
present a greater good in the promise then in
any thing else.

The second rule is, Labour to convince thy heart of this , that all the things in the world without the promise are not good, and hadst thou all that the Earth can afford without a promise, they were rather a curse to thee then a blessing. *Faith is the substance of things hoped for*, it gives a kinde of being and substance to all; There is no substance in honour and riches if they be not in faith; They are clogges and snares to a man, except faith give a Title therunto and a blessing therewith; All our prayers have no substance in them, but are poore and empty words without faith in the promise to have what wee pray for: The most broken and meane prayer, when a poore creature can scarce utter foure words with any sense, yet if it be mingled with *faith*, is a very powerfull prayer; And the substance of allyour hearing, and my preaching lyes in *faith*, otherwise they are but lost labour, for faith is it that gives a kinde of being to whatsoever we speake or doe.

The third rule in this second meanes, is this, Labour to acquaint thy heart with the goodnesse of the promise, before carnall reason comes and posselles thy heart. how that the promise is most sure, and will come when it is most reasonable, & is best for thee, & when God sees
it

it most fit we shall certainly have it ; *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace , that wee may receive comfort & mercy in time of need ;* not when I see it fit , but when God sees it fit, this is it which carries away many poore sinfull hearts from resting upon the promise of God ; sometimes the heart is a little affected with the excellency of the riches of Gods grace , and seeth what great things the Lord hath done for his soule , and saith , Oh that I were such a one , and let me die the death of the righteous ; but when it comes to passe that he hath not present ease and comfort , then hee casts away the good promise of the Lord, and the devill prevails wonderfully with these poore creatures : Therefore saith the Prophet , *When the figge tree shall not blossome, neither shall the fruit bee on the Vines , when the labour of the Olive shall faile and yeeld no fruit, then wil I rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation.* Saith the Prophet, Comfort from the promise , and from the Lord Jesus Christ is then seasonable , when I have most neede and may receive most good thereby; then shall I be sure to have the promise so to surprise my heart, that it may be possessed with theal-sufficiency of it.

Heb. 3. 17

Means. In the third place, see that thou expectest all the good which thou needest and canst desire from that sufficiency of the promise; Doe not thinke to bring any good with thee to the promise, but goe to the promise for all good; *there* are all the cords of mercy that must draw thee, and *there* is the al-sufficiency that can supply all thy wants, looke for all from thence, and expect power from the promise to inable thee to doe whatsoever thou wouldest, and to make thee able to beleeeve the promise.

Object. It is a weake plea for a man to say, I dare not look to the promise, I cannot beleeeve, if I could then I might expect some good.

Answ. Thou shalt never beleeeve upon these tearmes, thou must not first have faith and then goe to the promise, but thou must first goe to the promise, and from thence receive power to make thee able to beleeeve the promise, *O Lord remember thy word to thy servant, wherein thou hast caused me to trust.* When men are enlarged in love to a man, and make faire promises, this perswades the heart to trust to them, & to rely upon them for good; therefore a man doth use to say, I durst not have thought it, nor expected if you had not promised it; so the promise of God made to the soule, makes the soule to rest upon it.

To expect faith without a promise, is all one as if a man should expect a crop without seed, for the promise is the immortall seed of Gods Word, whereby the Spirit breeds this faith in the hearts of all that are his. *The houre* Ioh. 5. 25.
is comming and now is, when the dead shall heare the voice of the Sonne of God, and they that heare it shall live: It is spoken of raising of a dead man from the grave of sin. First, there is the voice of Christ to the soule, before there can be an Echo again of the soule to Christ; So the power of the promise must come to the soule, and wee must heare the voice of God in the promise before we can returne an Echo againe to the Lord; The Lord saith, *Come to mee,* and the Soule saith, *I come Lord.* When thou seest much deadnesse and unfirnesse of heart, doe not thou goe away, & looke of from the promise, & say: Thus I am, & so it is with me; But rather goe to the promise, & say, Whatsoever frailties I finde in my selfe, yet I will looke to the Lord, & to his promise, for if I want faith, the promise must litle mee more and more therein, I must not bring faith to the promise, but receive faith from thence, and therefore I will waite till the Lord please to worke it.

Lastly; labour to yeeld to the equall condition of the promise, and make no more condi-

say. 55.
12.

tions then God makes; now the promise requires no more of a man, but that hee should come and lay hold on mercy; therefore do thou require no more then God in the promise requires; there is enough in the promise to do thee good, therefore expect all good from it, and bee content to goe to the promise, and take of God whatsoeuer hee hath therein offered. *Buy without money*; This is the condition that God offers mercy upon, buy wine and Milke, that is, grace and salvation without money, that is without sufficiency of your owne; if a man should goe running up and downe to borrow money before he come to buy, he may famish before hee come; so the Lord offers Christs mercy and salvation, and saith, Come take it without money, and wee runne up and downe to borrow money of *prayer*, and *duties*, and *power against corruption*, but you may be starved before you buy, if you goe this way to work.

Therefore make Gods commodities no dearer then God himselfe makes them, for this is the cause why many a poore soule is kept from comming to the promise: Oh, saith one, if I were able to master my finnes and distempers as such a one can doe, then I would beleeve; this is to bring money; but art thou content to have

have Christ, and that Christ may have thee, and rule thee, and supply thy wants, and reveale thy finnes, and heale thy corrutions; then goe to the promise, & the Lord thereby will supply thy wants, and master all thy finnes and corrutions; but that must come afterward; *When I passed by thee, and saw thee in thy blood,* Ezek. 16. 8.9. (saith the Lord) *and behold the time was as the time of love, and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakednesse; yea, I entred into a covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine;* (that is, you were content that GOD should marry you in all your ragges) *and washed thee with water, yea I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and annointed thee with oyle, I cloathed thee also with broidered worke.* First, hee marries the Church to himselfe, and then hee gives grace, and passeth over his estate to his Spouse. Were it not a wonderfull great folly if some great King should make love to a poore Milkmaid, and shee should put it off, and refuse the match till shee were a Queene, whereas, if she will match with the King, hee will make her a Queene afterwards; so wee must not looke for sanctification, till wee come to the Lord in vocation; for this is all the Lord requires of thee, to see thy finnes, and bee weary of them, and bee content that the Lord
Jesus

Jesus shall reveale what is amisse, and take it away, and that the Lord should give thee grace, then the Lord will bring thee to himselfe, and thou shalt receive mercy from him, and then all thy corruptions shall fall to the ground. To summe up the point briefly thus:

VVhen we have pluckt away all carnall props, there is way made for the promise to come to us.

Secondly when our hearts are possessed throughly of the sufficiency of Gods promise & grace, then the promise drawes neere to the soule.

Thirdly, when wee expect all from the promise, even power to come to the promise, then the promise layes hold upon us.

Fourthly, when we are content to yeeld to the equall conditions of the promise, then the promise carries us quite away.

Thus wee have seene the hinderances removed, & the meanes propounded, and now, that we may bee moved and perswaded importunately to seeke after this blessed grace of God, let us consider thus much; if you once get this grace, you get all other graces with it; it is a ground of cōfort to set a man a work, when in the doing of one worke hee may doe another, nay, all workes; so it is in the worke
of

of faith, it should encourage us to labour for *faith*, because if wee get this wee get all: men that are wise to provide for themselves, and to lay out their money in a purchase for the best advantage, if they see it well wooded & watered, especially if there be some golden Mines, all their minde will be upon that, because if they have that they have all with it; so it is here get grace and get all, strengthen this & all is strong, want this & want all, once get this, & you need not seeke for wiledome, for *faith* will make you wise to salvation; & you need not labour for patience, for *faith* will make patiente, & *faith* will bring holinesse with it to purge you, for *faith* brings all grace. Now the Saints of God endeavour with much paines to get grace, & to subdue their corruptions; but yet they are feeble & weak therein, because they take not the right way.

*Faith te
be labou.
red for
above
all
graces.*

Many a poore Soule mournes and cries to Heaven for mercy, and prayes against a stubborne hard heart, and hee is weary of his life because his vile heart remaines, and yet happily never gets little or any redresse: And the main wound lyes here. Alas, you goe the wrong way, for if you would have grace you must first of all get *faith*, and that will bring all the rest; Buy the field, and the Pearle is yours;
you

you must not stand strugling & striving with your owne hearts, & thinke to master a proud heart, *that* will not doe it, but let faith goe to Christ, & there is meeknesse, patience, humility & wiledome, & faith will fetch all these to the soule. Brethren, if you set such a price upon any of these graces, the labour for faith, get that & you shall have all; the Apostle saith, *Wee*
 1. Cor. *all with open face beholding, as in a glasse, the glory*
 18. *of the Lord, are changed into the same Image from glory to glory.* The Lord Christ is the glasse, & the glorious grace of God in Christ, is compared to the glory of the Lord; therefore first we must behold the grace in Christ by faith, before we can receiue grace; first, see humility in Christ, and then fetch it there; first see strength & courage to enable thy weake heart, & then fetch it. Would not you be content to have a meeke, gracious and humble heart? I dare undertake for many of you, that you had rather have it then any thing under Heaven, & you would thinke it the best bargaine that ever you made; And you say, Oh that I could once see that day, that this proud heart of mine might bee humbled. If I could see the blood of my finnes, I should thinke my selfe happy, and desire to live no longer; Then get faith, and so buy the whole, for they goe all together;

gether; You must not thinke to have patience and meeknesse, without faith, but buy faith and you shall have all together: Would you have the glory of God, and bee more Heavenly minded, then looke to it, get it by the eye of faith, and looke up to the glory of God in the face of Iesus Christ, and then you shall see it; But hold you there then, and this will encrease all your graces, to your everlasting peace and comfort. When men use to make a purchase, they will reckon up all, and say, There is so much wood worth so much, and so much stock, worth so much, and then they offer for the whole, answerable to all the parcels: So there is *Item* for an Heavenly mind, that is worth thousands, and *Item* for an humble heart, that is worth millions. And are these graces worth so much? VVhat is *faith* worth then? Oh precious faith, it will bring all graces with it, one degree of grace after another: Grace here, and happinesse for ever hereafter. If we have any hearts of men, (I doe not say of Christians) me thinkes this should provoke us to
labour for this blessed grace
of God.

F I N I S.